



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 739  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012  
<http://lachildrenscommission.org>**

**Monday, August 19, 2013**

**10:00 AM**

AUDIO LINK FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING. (13-3886)

**Attachments:**    [AUDIO](#)

Present:            Chair Genevra Berger, Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, Vice Chair Susan F. Friedman, Commissioner Candace Cooper, Commissioner Patricia Curry, Commissioner Sydney Kamlager, Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, Commissioner Daphne Ng, Commissioner Steven M. Olivas Esq., Commissioner Sandra Rudnick, Commissioner Becky A. Shevlin, Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW and Commissioner Martha Trevino-Powell

Excused:           Commissioner Carol O. Biondi and Commissioner Ann E. Franzen

Call to Order. (13-3832)

**The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.**

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

1. Introduction of August 19, 2013 Meeting attendees. (13-3833)

**Self-introductions were made.**

2. Approval of the August 19, 2013 Meeting Agenda. (13-3834)

**On motion of Commissioner Adelina Sorkin LCSW/ACSW, seconded by Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, unanimously carried, (Commissioners Biondi and Franzen being absent), this item was approved with the following correction to Agenda Item 6 entry. Commissioner Olivas was not present during the vote taken for this item.**

### **Agenda Item 6**

#### **Presentation on the evaluation research of Family Preservation Services.**

- **Peter J. Pecora, Ph.D., Managing Director of Research Services, Casey Family Programs and Professor, School of Social Work University of Washington**
- **Todd Franke, ~~Casey Family Programs~~ Associate Professor and Director, Department of Social Welfare, Luskin School of Public Affairs, University of California at Los Angeles**
- **Jacquelyn McCroskey, John Milner, Professor of Child Welfare**

3. Approval of the minutes from the Meeting of August 5, 2013. (13-3835)

**On motion of Vice Chair Helen Kleinberg, seconded by Commissioner Dr. Sunny Kang, unanimously carried, (Commissioners Biondi and Franzen being absent), this item was approved. Commissioner Olivas was not present during the vote taken for this item.**

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

### **II. REPORTS**

4. Chair's report for August 19, 2013 by Genevra Berger, Chair. (13-3836)

#### **Chair Berger reported the following:**

- **Welcome Candace Cooper, new Second District representative for the Commission appointed on August 13, 2013. Commissioner Cooper served for nine years on the California Court of Appeals, Second District, most recently as Presiding Justice of Division Eight from 2001 to 2008, and as a Superior and Municipal Court judge prior to that. Commissioner Cooper has also served on the Los Angeles Superior Court for 12 years.**
- **Staff recently e-mailed the Commission regarding the County's Mileage Reimbursement Program. Commissioners wishing to participate, please complete forms as soon as possible and return to staff for processing.**
- **Due to the Labor Day holiday on September 2, 2013, the next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2013. The Commission's retreat will be held on September 9, 2013.**

- Commissioner Curry reported that at the August 6, 2013 Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Antonovich requested the Chief Executive Officer to report back within one week on the status of the January 2013 motion (Board Order No. 6 of January 5, 2013) that asked for Management Appraisal Performance Plan (MAPP) goals from the affected Departments to include transitional aged youth outcomes. Copies of the report were distributed to the Commission.
- Sandra Rudnick is retiring from the Commission for Children and Families. Sandra Rudnick has been a member of the Commission for 13 years. During her 13-year tenure on the Commission she has been an advocate for improving the oversight of children on psychotropic medication.

Commissioner Sorkin added that she has made great efforts in the area of prevention.

Commissioner Curry added that she also was instrumental in the development and funding of the first transitional housing program for transitional aged youth in the county through securing a grant from the Weingart Foundation.

Chair Berger added that Sandra Rudnick has been involved in children's issues for many years. Prior to becoming a Commissioner, she was Chair of United Friends of the Children (UFC), a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in the foster care system for 8 years.

The Commission is indebted to Sandra Rudnick for the many years of dedication to the children and families of Los Angeles County. The Commission will miss her.

By common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

5. DCFS Director's report for August 19, 2013 by Philip Browning, Director, DCFS. (13-3837)

Director Browning reported the following:

- The Board of Supervisors (Board) recently approved the hiring of 150 additional Social Workers. The New Children's Social Worker (CSW) Training Program's first class has started. The new curriculum is fifty-two weeks; training previously lasted eight weeks.

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The restructured curriculum includes a “real life” simulation component. Additionally, new hires are told upfront where they will be located upon completion of the program; the previous practice did not disclose this information until the end of the training. Some of the new staff will be placed in offices that are currently understaffed.

- The Case Load Equity Model (Model) will be used to determine where new incoming staff will be placed. The Model is a mathematical formula based on a number of variables to assist in determining location based on staffing needs. A different Model is used for the front end and back end work.
- There is a continued increase of children coming into the Children’s Welcome Center located at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. At the time the center opened, there were approximately 100 children under age 12 detained per month, currently there are approximately 400 being detained monthly.
- Probation Department has agreed to assist with background checks that are required before placing a child with a relative or family friend. This should assist in finding suitable placement in emergency situations.
- Finding placement has become more challenging particularly with children zero to five years old; this is partly attributed to a decrease in resources. In 2007, there were approximately 1,800 State licensed foster homes in the county, today there are 540. Also in 2007, there were approximately 4,500 foster homes through Foster Family Agencies (FFA) in the County, currently there are approximately 3,000. The State has sent the Department a notice of being in violation of the mandate to place children within 24 hours. A Los Angeles Times article is being released pertaining to this topic. To address these issues of limited placement, the State has suggested opening a shelter. A request has been sent to some of the current providers asking if they are able to set up shelter care.
- In terms of dual certification involved with becoming a foster parent, many applicants wishing to become a foster parent are detoured with having to undergo a dual certification process that involves providing information that is required should they plan to adopt. Some initiatives are underway with the faith-based community to promote becoming a foster parent.

After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.

### **III. PRESENTATION**

**6. Presentation on the evaluation research of Family Preservation Services.**

- Peter J. Pecora, Ph.D., Managing Director of Research Services, Casey Family Programs and Professor, School of Social Work University of Washington
- Todd Franke, Casey Family Programs
- Jacquelyn McCroskey, John Milner Professor of Child Welfare (13-3423)

**Ms. McCroskey provided a brief history of Family Preservation Services (FPS). In 1992, the County began operating FPS through State funding of family centered services. In 1994, Federal funds were made available for both family preservation and support. The Commission for Children and Families convened a committee that assisted in the design of the Family Preservation Program and the Family Support Program. These programs were rolled out as needs based programs.**

**Dr. Pecora distributed a document titled, “Family Preservation Services, Costs and Outcomes in Los Angeles” and reported the following:**

- **The presentation covers FPS progress and some of the current challenges. The data collected was provided by DCFS and is for the time period of July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2010.**
- **The FPS programs evaluated were Family Maintenance and Family Reunification. Family Maintenance includes programs designed to keep children out of foster care while Family Reunification is focused on attaining permanency for children in care. Both of these programs are administered under a voluntary or court-ordered basis. Voluntary services are designed for cases that can be resolved within six months and are considered a short-term intervention.**

**Dr. Franke explained that the following questions were considered when conducting research:**

- 1. Who is being served by different kinds of DCFS Family Preservation Services?**
- 2. What does it cost to provide these services?**
- 3. What kinds of family outcomes are being achieved, across LA and by individual FPS provider agencies?**
- 4. What do DCFS workers feel are the strengths, limitations and strategies for refinement for each of the current FPS contractors?**
- 5. What refinements need to be made in Family Preservation Services and performance measurement?**

**Who is being served by different kinds of FPS?**

The Department identified a focal child from each case in the Family Maintenance and Family Reunification programs. There were 14,586 children identified at the family level representing the data evaluated. The total number of all children in both programs was 34,640.

Ms. McCroskey added that the Structured Decision-Making (SDM) risk level data are not outcomes, but represent important information about the characteristics of the families or their household and neighborhood conditions. Case characteristics in terms of the percentage of families with high or very high risk ratings on the SDM scale varied across agencies.

**What does it cost to provide these services?**

Ms. McCroskey reported that the total expenditures of FPS for five fiscal years were approximately \$161 million. Under FPS there were four programs funded, the fourth program that is not represented in the outcomes data is FPS for Probation. The DCFS FPS program component accounted for over three-quarters of the County's total expenditure on FPS during the five fiscal years. The Alternative Response Services (ARS) and Probation FPS program components accounted for most of the remaining expenditures, with ARS expenditures at 12% and Probation FPS expenditures at 10%. The focus of the evaluation was DCFS FPS.

The current FPS contract has not significantly changed since it first started in 1992. The cost structure was initially set up with a base rate payment for conducting an initial assessment, weekly family visits and regular reporting to DCFS. Additionally, there were a set of additional specific services that could be billed for. However, the majority of the agencies did not bill for the additional services. This may be partly attributed to the billing categories being based on activities rather than performance. The categories no longer work in the current environment.

**What kinds of family outcomes are being achieved across the County and by individual FPS provider agencies?**

Dr. Franke reported the percentage of cases with re-referrals overall were moderate and varied substantially by FPS agency. There were 8.1% of children in a Voluntary Family Maintenance Program with substantiated re-referrals during FPS. The percent of substantiated re-referrals after completion of FPS were optimistic compared to the national levels.

The percent of child placements during and after FPS were fairly low.

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The FPS sites that are doing better are sharing information on their practices with other sites that are not doing as well.

During FPS, the family reunification rate was 66% and 45.7% after completion of FPS. These rates are very positive when compared to national rates. Since the study was conducted across five years, families that were reunified in the early part of the study may have shown up as a re-referral in the latter part of the study.

Eric Marts, DCFS clarified that the re-referrals are claims received through the call center or child abuse hotline.

The Commission requested the number the percentages of reunification were taken from. The presenters agreed to provide this information after the meeting.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Marts explained that the length of time a family can be in the Family Reunification Program is 18 months.

What do DCFS workers feel are the strengths, limitations and strategies for refinement for each of the current FPS contractors?

Ms. McCroskey explained that data rating the 64 FPS sites was collected from 811 Children's Social Workers (CSW). On a rating scale ranging from 1 - Strongly Disagree and 4 - Strongly Agree, the overall satisfaction rate was 3.14.

What refinements need to be made in FPS and performance measurement?

Ms. McCroskey provided the following recommendations as a result of the evaluation:

1. Increase the consistency of the FPS referral process across regional offices. Also assure that intake criteria are applied in the same way by contracted agencies.
2. Revisit DCFS reporting policies and train likely reporters to ensure clarity and consistency of processes and criteria guiding re-referrals for additional allegations of maltreatment while Family Preservation cases remain open.
3. Review, re-formulate and incentivize the intervention strategies used as part of FPS to increase the use of evidence-informed and evidence-based approaches.

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4. **Require a core set of assessment measures and performance indicators across all FPS contract agencies.**
  5. **Form a FPS Learning Network. Form an FPS learning network for contract agencies to share ideas and strategies to better work with families and improve the overall performance of the contractors.**
  6. **Incentivize FPS contractor program quality and fidelity.**  
**Once the new FPS program models and strategies desired for Los Angeles are established, DCFS should provide incentives to FPS contract agencies for achieving a certain level of model fidelity and quality. Because of differing community characteristics in Los Angeles, a slightly different composition of FPS services may be needed across different DCFS field office coverage areas. While there will be many core quality dimensions that will be common across contractors, some aspects may be more community specific. But service quality and fidelity to what DCFS considers the core intervention components can be measured, and could be used to promote high quality services.**
  7. **Refine service cost measurement.**
  8. **Pay contractors for up to 6 months of post permanency contractor services.**
  9. **Examine staffing capacity for the DCFS FPS contracting unit to monitor and coach the FPS contract agencies.**

**Dr. Pecora explained the following FPS challenges:**

1. **Revise the menu of FPS interventions to better match current family needs.**
2. **Standardize services referral and use across offices.**
3. **Families in every office should have access to services with the same quality.**
4. **Greater attention to successful Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) strategies such as Neighborhood/Family Action Councils, and Church-based Parent Visitation Centers.**

**The Commission requested an analysis showing the correlation between the length of services and success to age.**



**Leslie Acoca, President and Founder of National Girls Health and Justice Institute addressed the Commission.**

**After discussion, by common consent and there being no objection, this item was received and filed.**

**Attachments:**    [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)  
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

#### **IV. MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **Matters Not Posted**

7. Matters not posted on the agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (13-3838)

**There were none.**

##### **Announcements**

8. Announcements for the meeting of August 19, 2013. (13-3839)

**There were none.**

##### **Public Comment**

9. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (13-3840)

**No members of the public addressed the Commission.**

##### **Adjournment**

10. Adjournment of the meeting of August 19, 2013. (13-3841)

**The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.**